1 DANGER forward

The Magazine Of The Big Red One, Vietnam

The Rung Sat Special Zone

Vietnam Battles Part Three

The Ong Dong Jungle Clearing

Highway 13 Thunder Road

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SSGT Gerard Forken

"...Through half a century the Big Red One soldier has shown himself equal to any challenge our nation faces in the defense of freedom."

Major General John H. Hay
Commanding General
1st Infantry Division-1967

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DANGER forward

The Magazine Of The Big Red One, Vietnam

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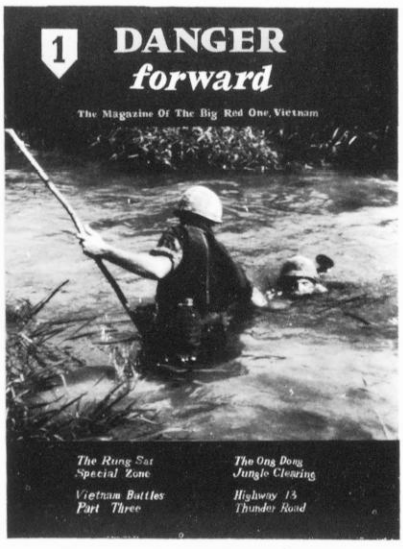

DANGER FORWARD was not published in October due to an unforeseen change in the production schedule. In this issue of the magazine is the third in a series of stories summarizing the major battles fought by the First Infantry Division in Vietnam. "Vietnam Battles-Part Three" takes into account Battles Fourteen through Eighteen. Related to two of these battles is the first part of a two-part narrative of the largest operation at that time in the war-JUNCTION CITY. This edition also features operations in the Rung Sat Special Zone; the story of the Ong Dong Jungle clearing; and an article on Vietnam's famous "Thunder Road," Highway 13.

CPT Richard W. Flanagan
Editor

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A soldier from A Company, 2/16 Inf, lends a helping hand to a buddy crossing a stream during a search and destroy mission. Photograph by SP5 Verland A. Gilbertson, 121st Signal Battalion, who was later killed in action on 17 Oct.

DANGER FORWARD, an authorized publication of the US Army, provides timely, authoritative information of professional interest on combat operations, revolutionary development programs and combat support procedures of the First Infantry Division, Vietnam. It serves as a means of expression for views of the Commanding General and achieves command information objectives of the Department of the Army and the First Infantry Division. Material of interest to Division members and the Army in general is invited and should be mailed to: Editor, DANGER FORWARD, Information Office, First Infantry Division, APO 96345. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of Department of the Army. The magazine is printed at Dai Nippon Printing Co., Ltd., Tokyo. The title DANGER FORWARD, is copyrighted by the Society of the First Division.

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THE RUNG SAT

SSGT Gerard Forken

WAIST DEEP AND GOING FORWARD. Members of the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, slosh their way through the swamps of the Rung Sat Special Zone during Operation LEXINGTON.

THE RUNG SAT SPECIAL ZONE, taking its name from the Vietnamese for "trees that live in salt water," is a vast wasteland some 20 miles southeast of Saigon, spider-webbed with salt streams. It is an area of over 400 square miles blanketed with thick, sticky mud and tightly woven jungle.

For years, the Zone has been a haven of the Viet Cong, who have used it as a major training point, resting place, and hospitalization and indoctrination center. The area is also an industrial complex where land and water mines, homemade grenades and punji stakes are made. The area is an important link in the VC supply system which receives goods from North Vietnam and ships them between Saigon and Vung Tau. It is also a base from which the Viet Cong conduct raids on commercial shipping.

Three times, the Rung Sat Zone has been the scene of extensive 1st Infantry Division operations: 21 May to 9 June 1966, 4 Sept to 8 Oct 1966, and 28 Nov to 23 Dec 1966. In each case, an infantry battalion met the enemy in what must be termed the worst terrain in Vietnam.

OPERATION LEXINGTON III

Operation LEXINGTON III was waged by the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, commanded by Major John C. Bard; A Battery, 1st Battalion, 7th Artillery (LTC John H. Fye III and MAJ Elmer H. Birdseye, Bn Cmdrs); a UH1B helicopter fireteam, plus naval gunfire and US Air Force and Navy air support.

The operation was not marked by large engagements with VC forces. On the contrary, the majority of enemy kills resulted from night ambushes conducted along streams and waterways. A typical ambush occurred the night of 4 June.

As dusk closed in on the mangrove swamps, B Company, 1st Bn, 18th Inf, set up an ambush along the intersection of a small stream and the Dinh Ba River. Soon after dark, a sampan with three Viet Cong was spotted making its way slowly down the river near the heavy protective growth of the bank. As the sampan passed by the ambush site, the marksmen opened fire.

The surprised Viet Cong tried to escape by jumping overboard, but the accurate fire of the hidden infantrymen proved too fast for them. Two of the enemy were killed and the third was wounded.

Remaining in position after the first encounter, the men lay patiently in the dense undergrowth and swamp. Another sampan was spotted floating slowly down the river.

As it passed the ambush site, the soldiers again opened fire. The three Viet Cong on the sampan were killed almost instantly and a Russian-made carbine and .45 caliber sub-machinegun were recovered.

In another incident A Company discovered an 18-foot motorized junk moored on a river within the swamps and decided to utilize it. The BIG RED ONE infantrymen got a chance to be "sailors" as a squad at a time was ferried across the water to its ambush position. Later, Staff Sergeant Anthony Young, Brooklyn, N.Y., and the

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members of his squad paddled the junk (the motor would not start) down river to lure the Viet Cong to the concealed company. However, no contact was made and the junk was destroyed the following morning.

In these and hundreds of other small unit actions on Operation LEXINGTON III, the 1/18 Inf proved that the BIG RED ONE soldier could fight and win in the uninviting terrain of the Rung Sat. This first operation paved the way for future missions in what the Viet Cong were rapidly learning, was no longer "their territory." Thirty-seven enemy were killed during the operation.

OPERATION BATON ROUGE

Operation BATON ROUGE was conducted by the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Warner S. Goodwin Jr.; three batteries of the 1st Battalion, 7th Artillery (LTC Carroll S. Meek, Bn Cmdr); the 128th Aviation Company; and a detachment of the 22d River Assault Group, Vietnamese Navy. As was true on Operation LEXINGTON III, the majority of VC casualties were inflicted as a result of ambushes laid at night along waterways.

Climaxing an intensified effort to disrupt shipping lanes in the area, the Viet Cong mined the United States cargo ship *Baton Rouge Victory* on 23 Aug. To counter this threat, the 1st Bn, 18th Inf, kicked off Operation BATON ROUGE on 4 Sept.

On the night of 30 Sept, three platoons from C Company, 1/18 Inf, lay in ambush along a river branch a short distance east of the Nha Be River. At the 1st Platoon ambush site, Lieutenant Hayter W. Haynes, Lookout Mountain, Tenn., had instructed his men not to fire until the sampan was directly in front of them. The men followed orders to the letter. When a boat did appear and two Viet Cong were spotted, the platoon opened fire with deadly accuracy.

At another ambush site, Staff Sergeant Franklin D. Strong, Hazard, Ky., and his men heard the firing in the 1st Platoon area and five minutes later heard voices in Vietnamese as the boat approached.

Private First Class Maris H. Magnunon, Wenatchee, Wash., saw two Viet Cong standing in front and one in the rear of the sampan. The Viet Cong apparently sensed something and turned their boat around. At that moment, Sergeant Strong gave the order to fire.

Private First Class Willie R. Parks, Mount Vernon, N.Y., placed a round from his M-79 grenade launcher dead center into the boat, while Sergeant Strong lobbed a grenade into the laps of the Viet Cong. Using a radio, the sergeant then directed his machinegunner, Private First Class Gary L. Bowers, Clinton, Mich., in placing devastating fire on the enemy. PFC Bowers had to mount his weapon on an air mattress to have a field of fire over the water.

THE ULTIMATE WEAPON. In hundreds of small unit actions, the BIG RED ONE *soldier proved that he could fight and win in the quagmire of the Rung Sat Zone.*

SP4 Reade Tilley III

PFC Michael Schumicky

RIVER CROSSING. SSGT Jerry E. Housten, a member of the 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry, crosses one of the many rivers in the Rung Sat Zone during the 2d Brigade's Operation CHARLESTON.

For the courage, initiative and skill he displayed time and time again on successful ambushes during the operation, Sergeant Strong was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with "V" (Valor) device. Fifty-nine Viet Cong were killed and 10 others captured in Operation BATON ROUGE.

OPERATION CHARLESTON

Operation CHARLESTON was waged by the 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Lewis R. Bauman, Springfield, Va.; the 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Elmer D. Pendleton Jr., Kansas City, Mo.; C Battery, 1st Battalion, 7th Artillery (LTC George L. McFadden Jr., Bn Cmdr); and other supporting units, such as the 173d Aviation Company.

Under the control of the 2d Brigade, commanded by Colonel Sam S. Walker, Belton, Tex., and later by Colonel James A. Grimsley; the operation consisted of extensive patrolling, ambushes and company-size search and destroy missions in the Rung Sat Special Zone.

The 2d Bn, 18th Inf, operated in the western portion of the Zone, while the 2d Bn, 28th Inf, conducted missions along the Zone's northern edge.

No major contact was made during the operation which began 28 Nov and ended 23 Dec. Those contacts that were made were by means of ambushes. Several very recently used basecamps were found; they obviously had been evacuated when the American soldiers approached.

On Operation CHARLESTON, as on previous operations in the Rung Sat, the BIG RED ONE soldiers found one of their main enemies to be the terrain. The principal problem was the constant threat of foot infections. To minimize the danger, the infantry companies slogged through the Zone for 48 hours and then were moved to Vung Tau for 48 to 60 hours, to "dry out."

The operation ended with 48 sampans captured and 12 Viet Cong killed.

SWAMP RATS. The courage and skill displayed by the men of the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, during Operation BATON ROUGE *earned for them the nickname "Swamp Rats."*

69th Signal Battalion

SP4 Henry Hunter

SP4 Phil Stitt

ILL-FATED SHIP. The US cargo ship Baton Rouge Victory was mined by the Viet Cong on 23 August 1966, in an effort to disrupt shipping in the Rung Sat. The VC threat in the area was countered by the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, during Operation BATON ROUGE.

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Vietnam Battles—14

CAM XE

THE BATTLE OF CAM XE was fought during the afternoon and night of 28 Oct 1966. The 1st Brigade of the First Infantry Division, while conducting Operation SHENANDOAH, received intelligence information on the location of a Viet Cong concentration. Using air-lifted assaults, the US forces boxed in the enemy unit and with airstrikes and artillery inflicted a grave defeat on the Viet Cong.

Special agent reports indicated the presence of a VC regiment some 16 miles south of the Minh Thanh Rubber Plantation, just east of the Cam Xe River and west of National Highway 13. The 1st Bde units moved into the area by helicopter to trap the enemy.

Part of the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Paul F. Gorman, arrived by air, while the remainder of the battalion together with A Troop, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry (LTC Leonard L. Lewane, Sqdn Cmdr) moved overland. At 1400 hours on 28 Oct, C Company, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry (LTC Jack G. Whitted, Bn Cmdr), which was to the north and moving south, was attached to the 1st Bn, 26th Inf.

Completing the "box" around the suspected VC location were the 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Elmer D. Pendleton Jr.; and the 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Lewis R. Bauman.

Within one hour after its elements had landed, the 1/26 Inf engaged the 3d Battalion, 272d Regiment, 9th Viet Cong Division.

The Viet Cong were initially engaged on a jungle trail; they used individual weapons such as AK-47 rifles along with one light machinegun and one wheel-mounted machinegun. The enemy also employed rifle grenades against the BIG RED ONE soldiers.

The contact began at 1410 hours when a VC force was moving in a single file in an easterly direction along a trial. Its presence was detected when the right flank platoon, the 3d Platoon of B Company, 1/26 Inf, consisting of 25 men, heard voices to its north. The platoon faced left and moved a few meters north. There, the men took up a hasty ambush position along the trail. At the platoon leader's signal, his platoon delivered a long volley of full automatic fire into the VC column. The latter withdrew to the east, leaving behind five dead.

At 1440 hours A Company, 1st Bn, 28th Inf, made heavy contact with a platoon-size VC force approximately 2,000 meters east of the area in the battle map.

At 1525 hours contact was again made. A second platoon of B Company, 1/26 Inf, was moving to the north of the same trail in an easterly direction. Upon hearing the small arms fire of the earlier contacts, this platoon faced to its right and moved south. Taking up a hasty position, the platoon engaged the VC force as it withdrew to the east. The Viet Cong dropped to the ground and the two forces exchanged automatic weapons fire. The insurgents made a number of unsuccessful attempts to place light and medium machineguns in positions of advantage; each time their maneuver elements were cut down by US infantry fire. B Company then called for airstrikes. Within three minutes after the company had marked its forward positions with colored smoke, the first of six airstrikes arrived. The first strike was within 50 meters of the VC column and subsequent strikes were moved southeast. In addition, 81mm mortar fire was brought to bear on the Viet Cong. The mortar rounds each produced a burst of enemy automatic weapons fire but after the airstrikes began, the fire subsided.

During the fight Private First Class Eugene Givens, Crestview, Fla., realized that the trail his patrol was using was probably a VC evacuation trail. He informed his patrol leader and an ambush was set up. Shortly afterwards, a company-size VC force walked into the ambush and an intense firefight ensued. Seeing a wounded machinegunner, PFC Givens crawled through heavy fire to help the soldier and killed two of the enemy as he went. Reaching the gun's position, he took over the weapon and killed several more Viet Cong. The gunner, Specialist 4 Rayford Miller, Monroe, La., who had been firing with deadly accuracy, was badly wounded but, refusing to be evacuated, he stayed with his weapon, serving as the assistant machinegunner. A rifleman with the patrol, Private First Class Robert Spencer, Norwood, Ohio, was seriously wounded during the action but he too remained in his position and laid down a heavy base of fire throughout the fight, which helped to break up the VC attack. All three men received the Bronze Star Medal with "V" (Valor) device. The enemy was forced to withdraw at 1540 hours, having suffered eight killed.

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SFC Frank Castro

TRAP. "Blue Spaders" of the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, are airlifted into an area west of Highway 13 to intercept the 3d Battalion, 272d VC Regiment, on 28 October 1966.

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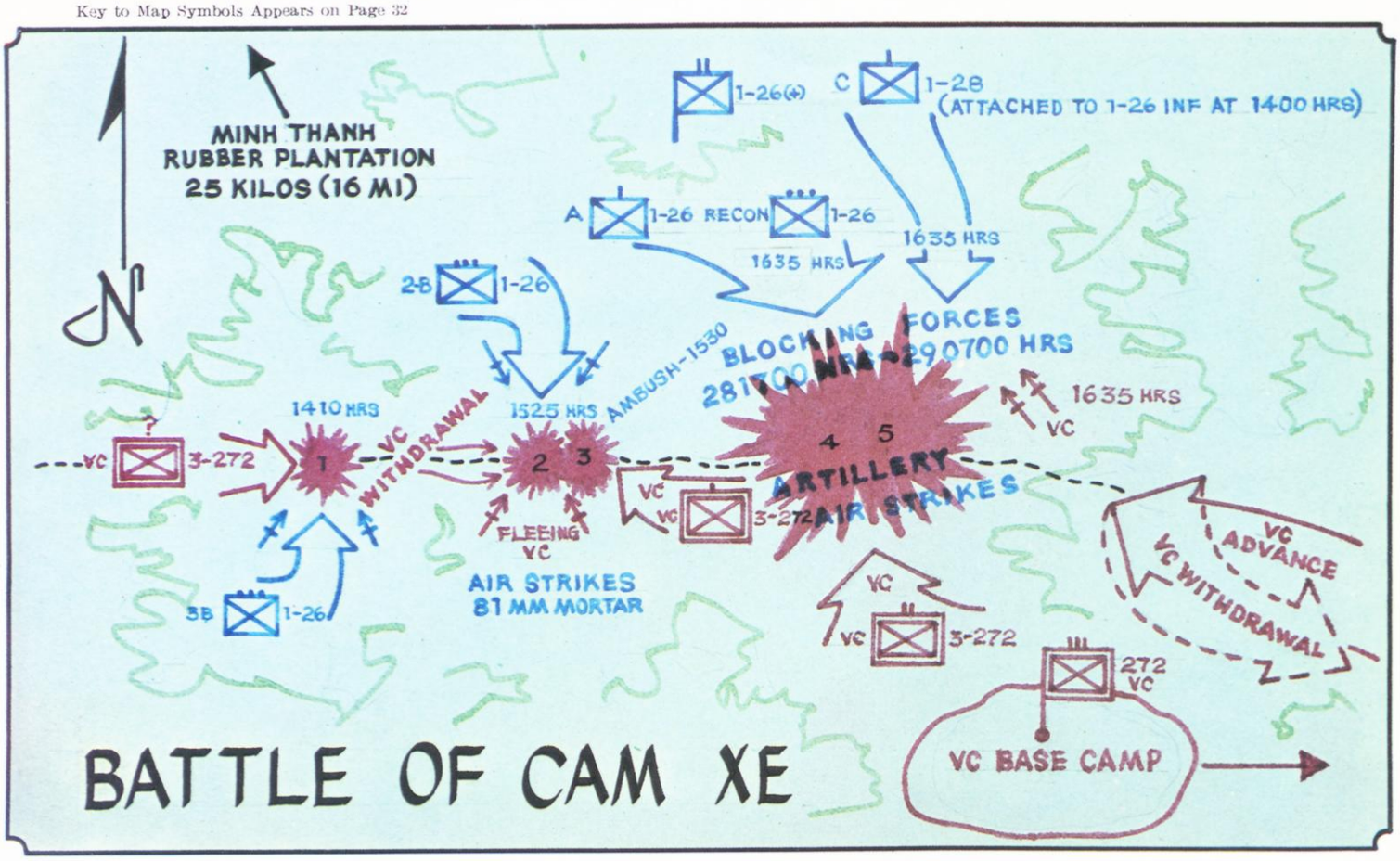

SP4 Henry Hunter

Meanwhile, at 1610 hours the 1/28 Inf(-) again made heavy contact to the east.

At 1635 hours the Reconnaissance Platoon of the 1/26 Inf encountered a VC force of unknown size. Artillery was called in. Half an hour later C Company, 1/28 Inf, received enemy automatic weapons fire. Once again, artillery and airstrikes were called in.

During the night a cooperative effort involving the blocking ground forces, artillery and airstrikes continued. A forward air controller (FAC) later described the action as "the most professional fight that I've ever seen." A total of 91 sorties were flown against, and almost 2,000 rounds of artillery fire placed on, enemy forces in the area.

On the morning of 29 Oct sweeps were made through the battle area. Eleven VC basecamps were found with evidence that the enemy had fled in disordered haste. An aerial observer reported that shortly after the battle, he saw a long VC column moving on a trail in the vicinity of the engagement. The column moved initially northwest toward the scene of the contact; after airstrikes it moved southeast away from the scene of contact. A regimental-size basecamp, possibly the headquarters of the 272d VC Regt, was discovered in the search. Bicycles, ducks and personal items were left behind by the enemy. Food was still on the tables when the soldiers of the BIG RED ONE moved into the area.

At the end of the search, it was determined that the Viet Cong had lost 74 men killed and two taken prisoner. US casualties amounted to only five KIA and eight WIA.

FIREPOWER. A 105mm howitzer throws out one of the more than 2,000 rounds of artillery placed on the 3d Battalion, 272d VC Regiment, during the BATTLE OF CAM XE.

SFC Frank Castro

121st Signal Battalion

CAV ON THE MOVE. Tanks from A Troop, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry, move onto Highway 13 prior to the BATTLE OF CAM XE.

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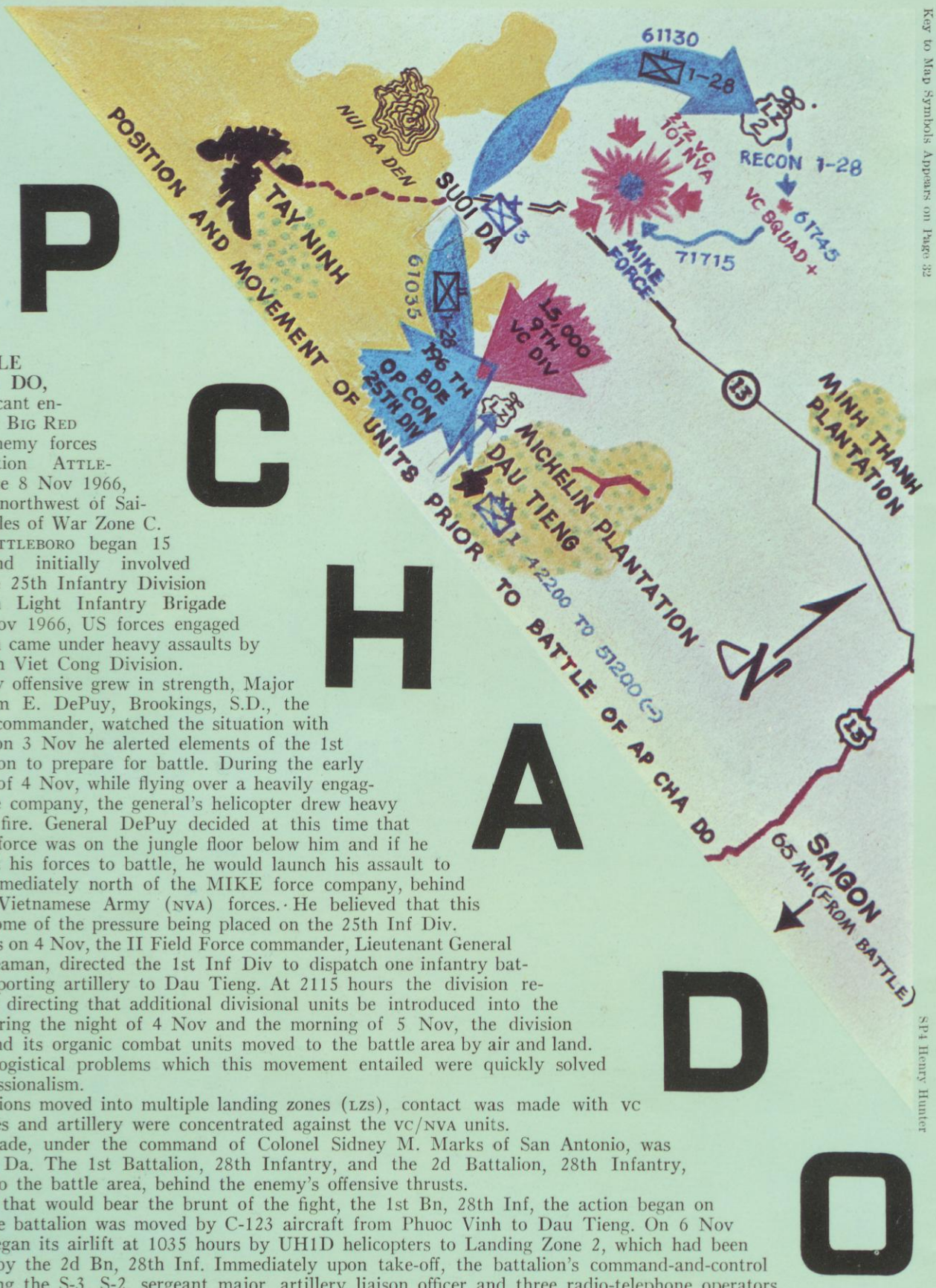
Vietnam Battles—15

AP CHA DO

By
CPT
George E.
Creighton Jr.



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SP4 Henry Hunter

THE BATTLE OF AP CHA DO, the most significant engagement of the BIG RED ONE against enemy forces during Operation ATTLEBORO, took place 8 Nov 1966, some 65 miles northwest of Saigon in the jungles of War Zone C.

Operation ATTLEBORO began 15 Oct 1966, and initially involved elements of the 25th Infantry Division and the 196th Light Infantry Brigade On 3 and 4 Nov 1966, US forces engaged in the operation came under heavy assaults by units of the 9th Viet Cong Division.

As the enemy offensive grew in strength, Major General William E. DePuy, Brookings, S.D., the BIG RED ONE commander, watched the situation with keen interest; on 3 Nov he alerted elements of the 1st Infantry Division to prepare for battle. During the early morning hours of 4 Nov, while flying over a heavily engaged MIKE force company, the general's helicopter drew heavy enemy ground fire. General DePuy decided at this time that a large enemy force was on the jungle floor below him and if he were to commit his forces to battle, he would launch his assault to the position immediately north of the MIKE force company, behind the VC/North Vietnamese Army (NVA) forces. He believed that this would relieve some of the pressure being placed on the 25th Inf Div.

At 1700 hours on 4 Nov, the II Field Force commander, Lieutenant General Jonathan O. Seaman, directed the 1st Inf Div to dispatch one infantry battalion with supporting artillery to Dau Tieng. At 2115 hours the division received an order directing that additional divisional units be introduced into the battle area. During the night of 4 Nov and the morning of 5 Nov, the division headquarters and its organic combat units moved to the battle area by air and land. The immense logistical problems which this movement entailed were quickly solved with high professionalism.

As the battalions moved into multiple landing zones (LZs), contact was made with VC forces. Airstrikes and artillery were concentrated against the VC/NVA units.

The 3d Brigade, under the command of Colonel Sidney M. Marks of San Antonio, was moved to Suoi Da. The 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry, and the 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry, were moved into the battle area, behind the enemy's offensive thrusts.

For the unit that would bear the brunt of the fight, the 1st Bn, 28th Inf, the action began on 5 Nov when the battalion was moved by C-123 aircraft from Phuoc Vinh to Dau Tieng. On 6 Nov the battalion began its airlift at 1035 hours by UH1D helicopters to Landing Zone 2, which had been cleared earlier by the 2d Bn, 28th Inf. Immediately upon take-off, the battalion's command-and-control chopper, carrying the S-3, S-2, sergeant major, artillery liaison officer and three radio-telephone operators, crashed, killing all on board except the S-2 and the artillery liaison officer.

At 1130 hours the battalion closed the LZ and dispatched patrols. At 1745 hours, 6 Nov, the Reconnaissance Platoon made contact with a reinforced VC squad, resulting in three enemy killed.

The next morning the battalion made a sweep through the area of the previous day's action. It then moved south and established a night defensive perimeter at 1715 hours. The 2/28 Inf was close by. At 1915 hours the 1/28 Inf was

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alerted to move the next day at 1115 hours to Tay Ninh and then back to its basecamp at Phuoc Vinh.

It was getting dark when the 1/28 Inf moved into its night defensive position (NDP). The battalion was unable to search out the area as thoroughly as is normally desired. There was a network of trails near its perimeter and a large basecamp nearby.

During the night and early morning of 8 Nov, the companies gave negative situation reports (SITREPS) to the battalion command post (CP). Earlier in the evening Lieutenant Colonel Jack G. Whitted, Panama City, Fla., the commander of the 1/28 Inf, had informed Lieutenant Colonel Elmer D. Pendleton Jr., Kansas City, Mo., the commander of the 2/28 Inf, that a reconnaissance by fire would be conducted, starting at 0600 hours.

At 0530 hours the 1/28 Inf conducted "stand-to" and began calling in its listening posts (LPS) and ambush patrols. At 0600 hours a reconnaissance by mortar fire was adjusted from east to west along the northern portion of the perimeter from the A Company sector to the B Company sector; two trip flares were set off outside of B Company's positions. Many enemy small arms and automatic weapons began firing into the US perimeter from the north and northwest. Claymore mines had been set up in two concentric circles around the perimeter the previous night. Some of these claymores had been tampered with during the night by the Viet Cong and failed to function; however, most of the mines were effective during the battle.

At the time the shooting began, the soldiers of the 2/28 Inf believed the firing to be the reconnaissance by fire that had been previously coordinated. Those men who were shaving or cleaning their weapons, continued to do so. When the firing increased in intensity and enemy small arms fire was received in the 2/28 Inf perimeter, the reality of the situation became readily apparent.

At 0620 hours heavy automatic weapons fire was received by B Company, 1/28 Inf, from the northwest,

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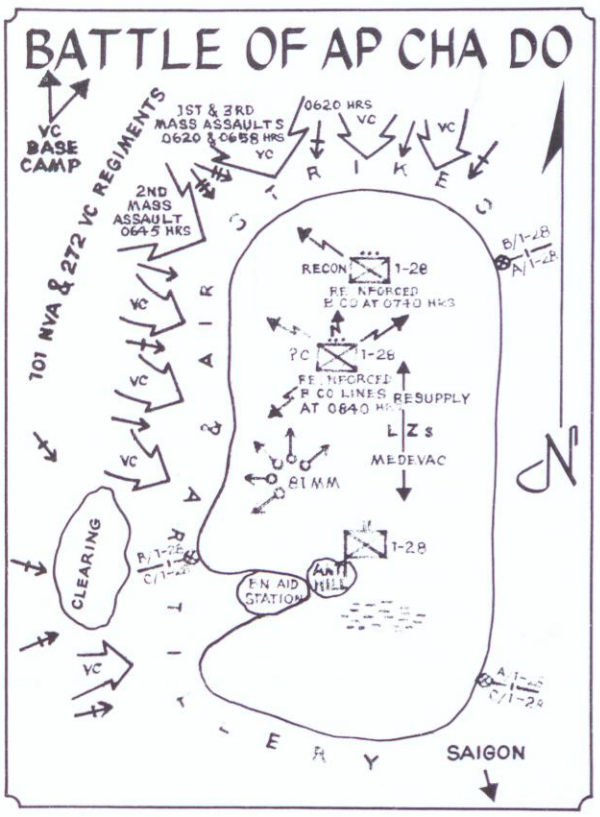


SP4 Henry Hunter

NIGHT AIRLIFT. On the night of 4 November, 3d Brigade troops moved to Suoi Da. Four days later, the BATTLE OF AP CHA DO *began, as the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 28th Infantry met and defeated* VC/NVA *forces in the jungles of War Zone C.*

SP4 Reade Tilley III

followed by a frontal assault by an estimated VC company. This initial attack was broken up by the firing of the first bank of claymores positioned in front of B Company. Air and artillery support from the 3d Bde at Suoi Da was immediately requested. Artillery defensive concentrations were fired initially into the area of the attack. The first attack lasted until 0634 hours when the Viet Cong started to fall back.

At 0645 hours a second assault was mounted against B Company, 1/28 Inf. This attack was broken up by firing the second bank of claymores. The Viet Cong started to withdraw again at 0653 hours but small arms, automatic weapons and grenades continued to come in as they had since 0615 hours.

The artillery initially fired massive defensive concentrations along the northern and western sides of the perimeter. With the arrival of the forward air controller (FAC), the artillery was shifted to the southern sector of the 1/28 Inf perimeter. Numerous airstrikes rained death and destruction on the enemy forces north and northwest of the perimeter. Despite all the heavy firepower being placed on his assaulting troops, the enemy continued to attack.

At 0658 hours the Viet Cong attacked again from the northwest and began to commit increasingly larger groups of assault troops in an attempt to penetrate the battalion's perimeter. From the north along the western side of the perimeter to the south, the Viet Cong launched attacks every five minutes. Airstrikes were directed with devastating effect on the enemy. Thousands of rounds of 105mm and 155mm artillery together with 81mm mortar fire were brought to bear on the enemy in the surrounding jungle area.

At 0740 hours the battalion reserve, the Recon Platoon, was committed to fill the gap in the hard-hit 2d Platoon of B Company. A platoon from C Company was redeployed to reinforce B Company's lines. Throughout the battle, the battalion's lines were constantly readjusted and the airstrikes and artillery were directed on the enemy attacks.

During the course of the battle, an enemy machinegun hammered away at the battalion's perimeter, inflicting numerous casualties. Sergeant (then Specialist) Kirk J. James, Brooklyn, N.Y., a fireteam leader in B Company, crawled out approximately 50 feet until he was parallel with the enemy gunner and took the Viet Cong out of

SP4 Phil Stitt

SFC Frank Castro

▲ *COMMO. Men of the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry, prepare to string wire in the unit's night defensive position on 7 November. The next morning at 0620 hours, a VC company initiated a frontal assault on the perimeter.*

◀ *POUNDING. Division artillery pours round after round into the jungles of War Zone C during Operation ATTLEBORO. Murderous fire support such as this enabled the 1st Battalion, and 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry, to turn the tide of battle against communist forces at Ap Cha Do.*

action with a blast from his 12-gauge shotgun. Sergeant James then began bringing ammunition to the B Company troops on the line. Under constant fire from enemy automatic weapons, he moved from position to position, delivering ammunition, supplies and hand grenades to the men who were able to continue the fight. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross on Christmas Day by General Harold K. Johnson, Chief of Staff, US Army.

During the battle medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) helicopters were daringly piloted into the landing zones under heavy fire to evacuate US casualties. Other choppers sped to and from the scene bearing company "ammo packs." These ready-made packs included the materials used in battle by an infantry company.

Captain Clarence B. Sprouse, Delbarton, W. Va., then the division sergeant major and acting also as the 1/28 Inf's sergeant major, stood in the middle of an unprotected and insecure landing zone, which had been carved out of the jungle. Captain Sprouse directed each ammunition resupply helicopter that came in and coordinated the distribution of ammunition. Even when the fiercely fought battle rose in intensity, he remained at his self-assigned post, insuring the delivery of ammunition to the embattled troops. For his actions, the captain was awarded his second Silver Star Medal.

As the battle continued, the Air Force and artillery blasted the enemy with devastating and pinpoint accuracy. From behind a five-foot anthill, Colonel Whitted, although wounded, directed the battle.

After circling the battle area for over an hour, a "Dust Off" chopper settled into a clearing and drew heavy enemy fire from three sides. Chaplain (CPT) Michael Quealy, 2/28 Inf, a Roman Catholic priest from New York City, jumped from the helicopter and dashed to Colonel Whitted's CP.

Ignoring the intense enemy fire, Father "Mike" Quealy ran to the scene of the battle and began administering last rites to the dead and dying, evacuating the wounded and helping out in every way that he could. Father Quealy was credited with saving several lives.

A soldier who was near the priest when he died, explained that three enemy machineguns were firing at them. One of the bursts hit Father "Mike" and he fell, mortally wounded.

At 0830 hours B Company, 2/28 Inf, heard enemy movement; the Viet Cong were then swiftly engaged by a light fireteam of helicopter gunships.

At 0957 hours the 1/28 Inf dispatched patrols to the north, northwest and west of the perimeter, in an attempt to regain contact with the Viet Cong. By 1100 hours the battle had subsided and only a few snipers, tied to their positions in the trees around the perimeter, remained. By 1130 hours the snipers had been killed and the battle was over.

When Colonel Pendleton's 2/28 Inf swept the then quiet battlefield, it learned why the Viet Cong had been so determined. The enemy had been defending a large basecamp in which were large caches of ammunition and supplies, the largest taken in the Vietnam War at that time.

In the enemy camp BIG RED ONE soldiers found more than 19,000 grenades, a claymore factory, 1,135 pounds of explosives, 400 bangalore torpedoes, a command radio system, 121 bicycles and thousands of other miscellaneous items ranging from bolts of cloth to weighing scales.

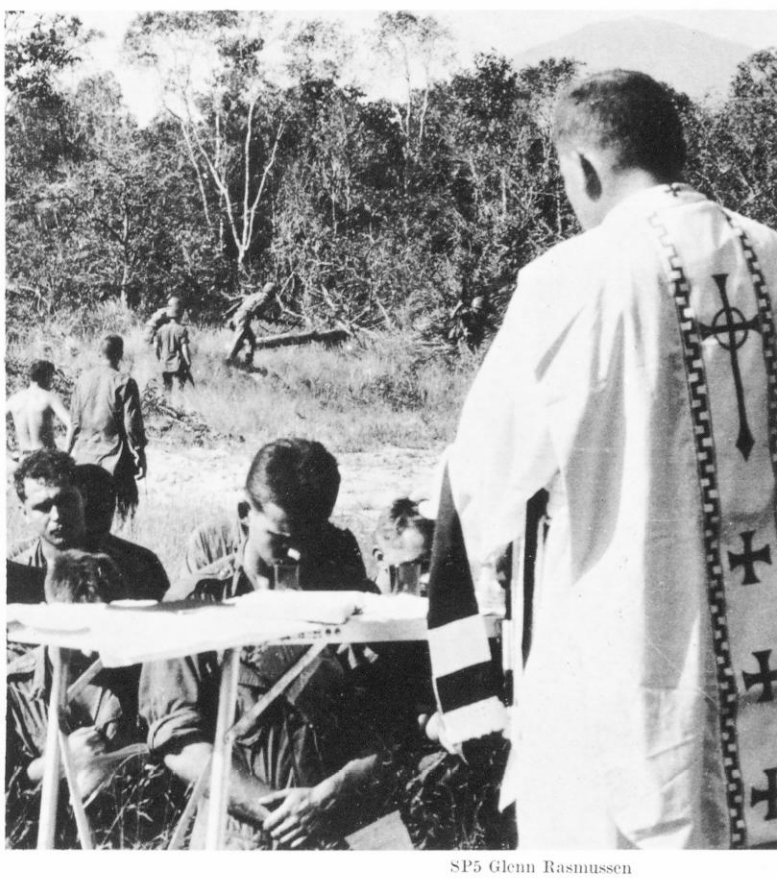
The basecamp, discovered by C Company, 2/28 Inf, commanded by Captain Joseph Paone, Brooklyn, N.Y., stretched through the jungle for more than a mile. It was perfectly concealed from aerial observation; overhead trees had been tied together. The bunkers were carved into the ground and constructed from a variety of materials, including steel.

In the heart of the basecamp, the infantrymen found large kitchens, a volleyball court with a net made of vines, a ping-pong table with paddles, a classroom in which freshly filled bowls of rice were abandoned, along with battle plans, trigonometry problems and even personal mail.

THE BATTLE OF AP CHA DO cost the enemy 305 killed. On 9 Nov an additional 94 VC bodies were found in a bunker 300 meters from the battle site. These casualties were probably inflicted during the previous day's battle. The enemy units were identified as the 101st North Vietnamese Army Regiment and the 272d Viet Cong Regiment. US casualties for the action stood at 21 killed and 42 wounded.

During Operation ATTLEBORO, the largest operation in the war at that time, the BIG RED ONE killed 845 Viet Cong.

GALLANT PRIEST. Chaplain (CPT) Michael Quealy says Mass for the men of the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry. He was mortally wounded during the BATTLE OF AP CHA DO, *while administering last rites to the dead and dying.*



SP5 Glenn Rasmussen

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Vietnam Battles—16

HOA NHUT

THE BATTLE OF HOA NHUT is distinguished by the fact that it was fought during Operation LAM SON II, a First Infantry Division operation in support of the revolutionary development effort of the South Vietnamese government in an area stretching from Phu Loi to Tan Uyen to Ben Cat.

On 17 July 1966, the 2d Battalion (Mechanized), 2d Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Jack L. Conn, Olympia, Wash., relieved the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, on LAM SON II in the Phu Loi area. Near the end of July, the battalion's companies moved into different villages for whose revolutionary development they were to be responsible. A Company moved into the village of Binh Chuan; B Company into the village of Tan Phuoc Khanh; and C Company into the village of Hoa Nhut.

The companies conducted medical civic action program (MEDCAP) operations in each of the villages. In Hoa Nhut C Company, commanded by Captain Gary L. Race, Orlando, Fla., made improvements on the local school, built playground equipment for the school children and erected a flagpole, from which the Republic of Vietnam flag flutters, in the center of town. Milk programs were started in each of the villages; plastic cups were purchased from G-5 funds and powdered milk was provided by the division's 1st Supply and Transportation Battalion; the public school children drank milk daily.

In the early evening of 15 Nov 1966, all seemed quiet in the area for which the 2d Bn (Mech), 2d Inf, was responsible. But, unknown to the BIG RED ONE soldiers, local Viet Cong were setting up positions, some to the north of C Company at Hoa Nhut, and some to the east of B Company at Tan Phuoc Khanh, located about 1½ miles west of Hoa Nhut. The positions north of C Company included mortar positions, blocking positions, reaction positions and even communications installations. The positions east of B Company, by contrast, were exclusively 60mm mortar positions.

At about 2400 hours a VC mortar attack against both B and C Companies began. The attack against B Company consisted of a total of 15 rounds, concluding at approximately 0200 hours. Meanwhile, in addition to

SP4 Don Tallman

RAMRODS. Men of the 2d Battalion (Mechanized), 2d Infantry, land in the Phu Loi area to relieve the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, on Operation LAM SON II.

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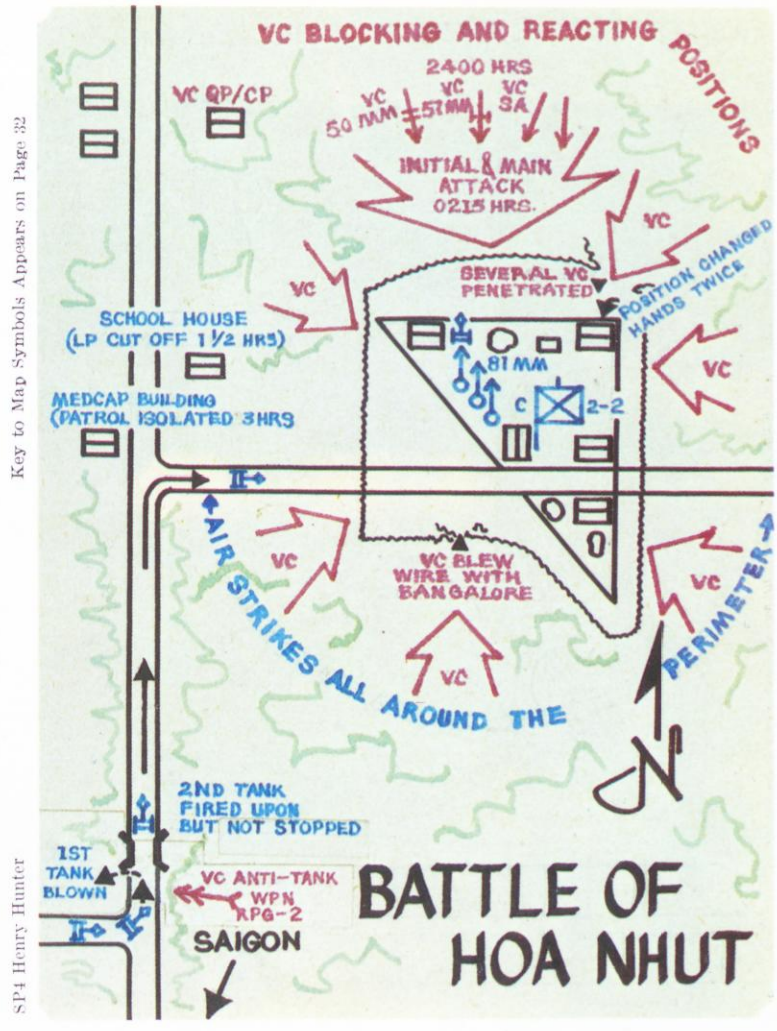
SFC Frank Castro



◀ *THE OTHER WAR. Division troops and ARVN personnel get ready to secure another village during Operation* LAM SON II. *One of these villages, Hoa Nhut, was the scene of a fiercely fought battle between the 2d Battalion (Mechanized), 2d Infantry, and communist forces on 16 November.*

mortar rounds, C Company was receiving white phosphorous grenades, hand grenades, rifle grenades, machinegun fire, recoilless rifle fire and small arms fire.

Illumination was called for and when it was provided, an impending VC ground attack from the north was observed. Upon reaching the company's perimeter, the enemy managed, despite C Company's resistance, to split their force and expand their attack to include the east and west sides of the perimeter.

Captain Race, learning of the VC ground attack, dashed to the north side of the perimeter where he moved from position to position, directing operations, giving encouragement and making sure that his men were adequately supplied. For his daring leadership throughout the battle, he was later awarded the Silver Star Medal.

The Viet Cong eventually moved to the south; thus, C Company was completely encircled. But the BIG RED ONE company fired at the enemy from all sides of its perimeter. The intense and effective fire kept the Viet Cong at bay.

Shortly after the battle started, C Company sent an ammunition request to the Battalion Tactical Operations Center. Two tanks from B Company, 2d Battalion, 34th Armor (LTC Raymond L. Staley, Bn Cmdr), were dispatched to the unit's aid. The tanks moved through Vinh Truong village toward C Company's position, moving from west to east. They reached the north-south road and turned north, approaching a bridge. As the lead tank drew near the bridge, an anti-tank weapon (RPG-2) was fired into it; the driver was killed. The tank went off the road to the left and, within seconds, a second anti-tank round was fired into the turret. The tank burst into flames, leaving no survivors. The second tank made a check of the area and then moved north to C Company's position. It also received anti-tank fire but was not disabled. It arrived at its destination and provided both the needed ammunition and additional fire support.

During the attack the Viet Cong managed to penetrate the perimeter. On the northeast corner of the berm in Hoa Nhut, they were able to seize and hold one position for a short time. The counter-attack by small groups from C Company forced the enemy out. Twice this position changed hands.

Throughout the night deadly artillery fire fell on the attacking Viet Cong around the perimeter. This, combined with the small arms fire of the unit, made effective by illumination, stopped the VC attack. Under cover of their mortar fire, the Viet Cong began to withdraw. American artillery fire continued to pound the area, insuring that they would not soon return.

The enemy left behind 43 killed, one captured and an assortment of bangalore torpedoes, shape charges, anti-tank weapons, grenades and anti-personnel mines. US casualties were five killed and 23 wounded.

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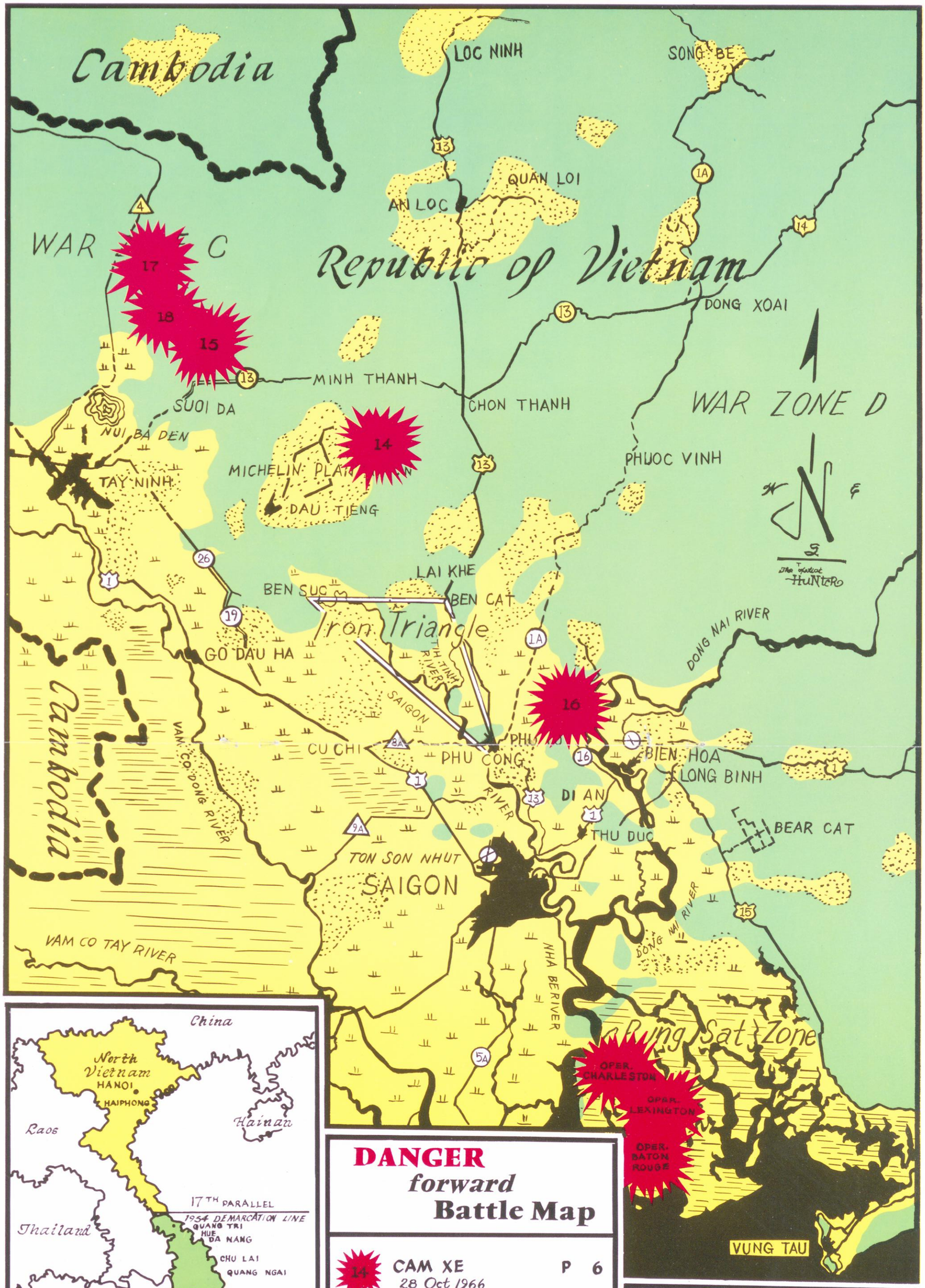

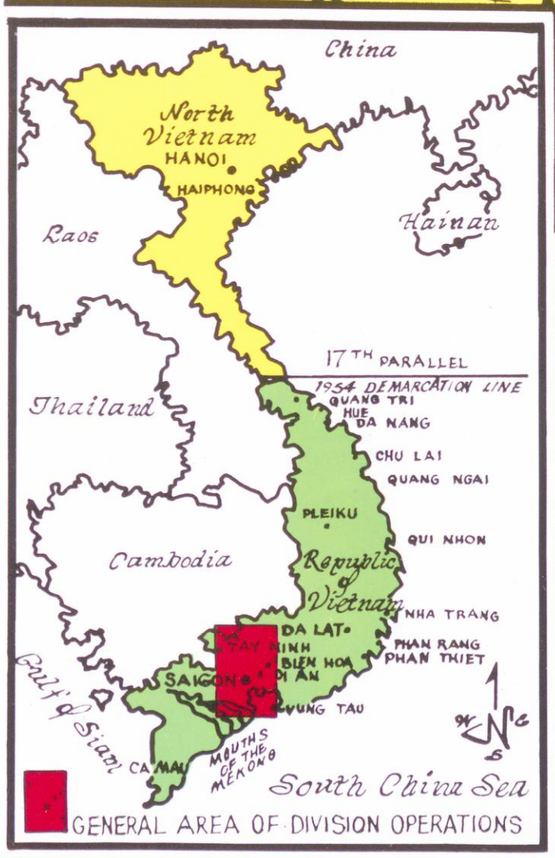

DANGER *forward* Battle Map

14	CAM XE 28 Oct 1966	P 6
15	AP CHA DO 8 Nov 1966	P 10
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17	PREK KLOK I 28 Feb 1967	P 19
18	PREK KLOK II 10 Mar 1967	P 21

DIVISION INFORMATION OFFICE (PIO)
1ST INFANTRY DIVISION, APO SF 96345

DISTANCE IN MILES
0 5 10 20

ROADS NATIONAL SECONDARY INTERNATL
BOUNDARY (INTERNATIONAL)
AERODROMES (MIL OR CIVIL)
WOODLAND
RUBBER TREES
RICE PADDIES/WASTELAND
SWAMP/MARSH

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Part One

JUNCTION CITY

OPERATION JUNCTION CITY, the largest American operation of the Vietnam War up until that time, began 22 Feb 1967. It took place in an area which included War Zone C and encompassed the jungles between the Cambodian border on the north and west, Highway 13 on the east and a line from Tay Ninh City to Ben Cat on the south.

The thick jungles of War Zone C had provided a sanctuary for insurgents for over 20 years. The Viet Minh had used the zone as a base of operations against the French; subsequent to this, the area harbored Viet Cong basecamps and supply caches.

The entire operation, which was conducted in two phases, was aimed at destroying VC installations in the area, which was also the suspected site of the supreme VC headquarters or Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) of the National Liberation Front (NLF).

Operation JUNCTION CITY was under the control of the II Field Force commander, Lieutenant General Jonathan O. Seaman, himself a former BIG RED ONE comander. Major US units involved in addition to the 1st Infantry Division were the 25th Infantry Division, the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, the 1st Brigade of the 9th Infantry Division (OPCON to 1st Inf Div), the 196th Light Infantry Brigade and the 173d Airborne Brigade. These units formed a giant horseshoe to enclose 250 square miles of the War Zone C area.

The 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry; 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry; and the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, all under the command of Colonel William B. Caldwell III, Orlando, Fla., were heli-lifted in 60 to 70-chopper lifts into the area at the top of the giant horseshoe.

The 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry; 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry; the 2d Battalion (Mechanized), 2d Infantry; the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry; and B Company, 2d Battalion, 34th Armor; under the command of Colonel Sidney M. Marks of San Antonio, moved on tanks, armored personnel carriers (APCS) and by foot up Provincial Route 4 at the start of the operation.

On 28 Feb, approximately 18 miles northeast of Tay Ninh City, division forces, under the command of Major General John H. Hay, Billings, Mont., scored the biggest victory up until that time in Operation JUNCTION CITY. A 5½-hour battle occurred when a BIG RED ONE company encountered what was later determined to be a battalion from the 101st North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Regiment. The engagement came to be known as THE BATTLE OF PREK KLOK I, named after the stream west of which it was fought.

Vietnam Battles—17
Prek Klok I

At 0800 hours on 28 Feb, B Company, 1st Bn, 16th Inf (LTC Rufus C. Lazzell, Bn Cmdr), left the battalion's night defensive position (NDP), which was parallel to and ran along Route 4, and proceeded east on a search and destroy mission.

The exasperatingly slow movement through the thick jungle was made in two columns. The order of march was 3d Platoon, 2d Platoon, 1st Platoon; each platoon was divided into two columns. The headquarters group—which included the company commander, Captain Donald S. Ulm of Seattle, who was to receive the Silver Star Medal for his part in the action—was located between the 2d and 1st Platoons.

As the company pushed on, the jungle became somewhat less thick and the primary obstacle became the presence of considerable "deadfall," which was encountered at 50 to 75-meter intervals.

During the move "cloverleaf" patrolling was conducted twice between the highway and the point of initial contact.

At 1030 hours the lead element of the 3d Platoon was fired upon from the east (front) by small arms and automatic weapons. The enemy force was initially reported to be a company-size unit, but when Captain Ulm learned that three enemy machineguns had been observed to the front, he concluded that the enemy force was larger than a company-size unit. The Viet Cong were well concealed but not dug in, and thus not really ready to ambush a company-size unit.

The 3d Platoon continued to receive heavy fire and was unable to gain fire superiority. Then when it reported being hit on its right flank (south) as well as to the front, Captain Ulm had the 2d Platoon move to the 3d Platoon's right flank, which it successfully did.

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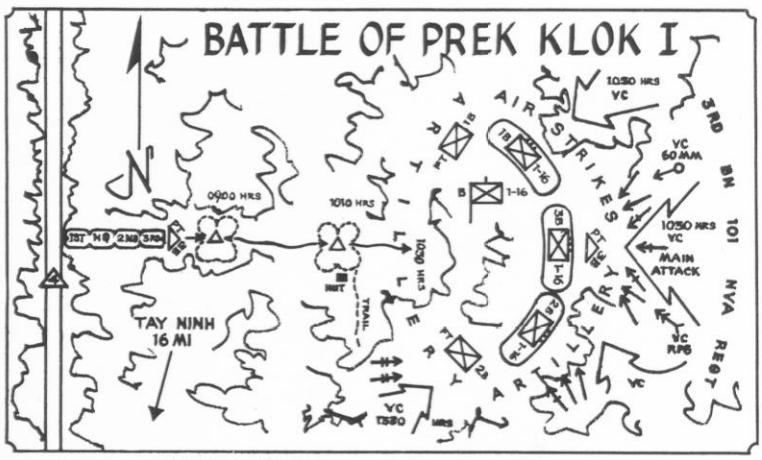

SP4 Henry Hunter

At 1050 hours the enemy launched an attack from the northeast. Contact had been lost between the 3d Platoon and the command group. It appeared to Captain Ulm that the 3d Platoon and possibly the 2d Platoon would be flanked from the direction of the renewed attack. So he directed the 1st Platoon to move to the left flank of the 3d Platoon. As the 1st Platoon did so, the entire company area was hit by rifle grenades, rockets and 60mm mortar rounds. This fire resulted in very few casualties.

At 1230 hours radio contact was re-established with the 3d Platoon. The company was in a rough horseshoe-shaped perimeter: 3d Platoon in the center (east), 2d Platoon on the right flank (south) and 1st Platoon on the left flank (north). The enemy continued to place intense fire from left to right on the company.

At this time Captain Ulm realized that much of the automatic weapons and small arms fire was coming from the trees; the fire was extremely accurate. The snipers were expertly camouflaged and well concealed. The com-

SP4 Phil Stitt

AIR ASSAULT. A Vulture chopper from the 162nd Helicopter Company, 11th Aviation Battalion, is first off the ground from Minh Thanh during Operation JUNCTION CITY.

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SFC Frank Castro

SEARCHING. Troops from B Company, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, move out on a search and destroy mission the morning of 28 February. At 1030 hours the lead element was fired upon and the BATTLE OF PREK KLOK I *began.*

pany's efforts were now directed at the snipers in the tree.

At 1300 hours the 2d Platoon detected movement to the west and it appeared that the enemy was attempting to encircle the company and attack the open (west) end of the perimeter. To meet this threat a fireteam from the 1st Platoon was moved to the northwest and a squad from the 2d Platoon was moved to the southwest. As the latter squad moved into position, it received heavy automatic weapons fire from the trees to the west. The fire was returned and artillery was called in on the western side of the company.

Heavy enemy firing continued until 1400 hours, when the effort declined into a "selected sniper program." By 1500 hours all enemy contact was broken. Shortly before dark, two companies made a rapid sweep of the battle area. They discovered 146 enemy bodies. Firing continued throughout the night and an intensive search the next day revealed another 21 enemy dead. Friendly casualties sustained were 25 men killed and 27 others wounded.

Ten days later a mortar barrage on Fire Support Patrol Base II heralded what was to be the second major US victory in Operation JUNCTION CITY.

Vietnam Battles—18
Prek Klok II

On the evening of 10 Mar 1967, the 2d Battalion (Mechanized), 2d Infantry(-), under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Edward J. Collins of San Antonio, was securing the perimeter of Artillery Fire Support Patrol Base (FSPB) II, located in Tay Ninh Province near the Prek Klok stream. Inside the "wagon train" style perimeter of FSPB II were Headquarters and C Batteries, 2d Battalion, 33d Artillery (LTC Charles D. Daniel, Bn Cmdr), and elements of the 168th Engineer Battalion.

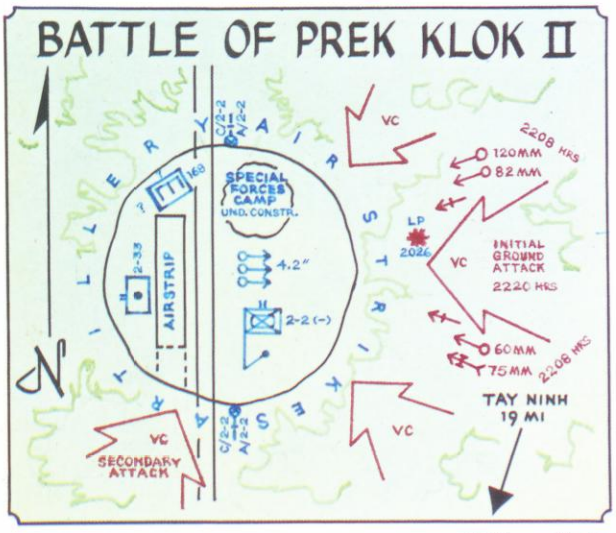
The 2d Bn (Mech), 2d Inf's armored personnel carriers (APCS) were placed at 50-meter intervals around the base perimeter. The intervals between the tracks were protected by foxholes, manned by infantrymen, engineers and artillerymen.

As dusk fell, all was quiet at FSPB II. The troops on the perimeter fired a "mad minute" at 1900 hours to test their weapons and ward off would-be attackers. After this, ambush patrols and listening posts (LPS) departed the perimeter.

At 2026 hours a LP from A Company, 2/2 Inf, reported seeing three Viet Cong while moving into position. The enemy soldiers were engaged by the LP with small arms with unknown results. As a result of this contact, the battalion was placed on a 75% alert as pre-planned artillery destruction fires continued.

At 2208 hours the Viet Cong commenced a heavy mortar attack on FSPB II. Located 1,700 meters to the east of the perimeter, they fired a barrage of approximately 200 rounds of 120mm, 82mm and 60mm mortar ammunition for about 30 minutes. In addition to the incoming mortar rounds, the Viet Cong fired 75mm recoilless rifles at the perimeter. The enemy had the perimeter targeted as the rounds landed inside and struck several tracks. Within two minutes after the initial attack, a counter-mortar fire program was initiated.

Key to Map Symbols Appears on Page 32



SP4 Henry Hunter

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A score of US troops were wounded in the VC mortar attack. Cooks, maintenance crews and medical personnel began carrying the wounded to the airstrip resupply point where helicopters removed them and resupply missions were accomplished.

During the attack Major Frederic J. Brown, Wellesley, Mass., moved from a position of cover into the impact area of the enemy mortar rounds to determine the location of the VC positions by crater analysis and direct friendly fire on them. Throughout the mortar attack and the ground attack which followed, Major Brown stayed in this dangerous position, silhouetted by illumination rounds, in order to accomplish his purpose. He was later presented the Silver Star Medal for his gallantry.

As soon as the mortar barrage ended, Colonel Collins directed all his units to conduct a reconnaissance by fire of the area 200 to 600 meters beyond the perimeter. This was done with fire from .50 caliber machineguns mounted on the tracks and from ground-mounted positions. Individual weapons were fired from the foxholes.

The reconnaissance by fire had no sooner ended when the enemy launched a ground attack at 2200 hours along the eastern sector into the positions held by A Company, 2/2 Inf.

Among those firing the track-mounted machineguns and small arms—not now in reconnaissance but in defense—was Staff Sergeant Richard A. Griffin of A Company. During the mortar attack Sergeant Griffin had run from his sheltered position to resupply his comrades along the perimeter with ammunition. When the ground attack began, he returned to his machinegun and placed a heavy volume of accurate fire on the enemy. He was later awarded the Bronze Star Medal with "V" (Valor) device.

The heavily engaged units at FSPB II immediately called the 3d Brigade forward headquarters at Suoi Da and requested close tactical air support, artillery, medical evacuation for the wounded and ammunition resupply. The response to these requests was immediate. Medical evacuation and resupply were provided with the dispatch of five UH1D helicopters that flew 26 sorties under fire. With their landing lights on, these aircraft brought in over 11 tons of resupply. Air support was provided by 100 sorties of TAC air.

In addition to the main attack from the east, the Viet

US Air Force Photo

AIRSTRIKE. During the BATTLE OF PREK KLOK II, *US Air Force jets rained death and destruction on the attacking enemy forces with bombs, rockets and 20mm cannon fire.*

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SP4 Phil Stitt

WAITING. Infantrymen, artillerymen and engineers helped to man the wagon train-style perimeter of Fire Support Patrol Base II on the night of 10 March 1967.

Cong also launched less forceful attacks from the northeast and southeast.

Intense fire from recoilless rifles and automatic weapons was still being delivered against A Company on the eastern side of the perimeter. This company bore the brunt of the attack as three APCs were hit by RPG-2 fire, while one track received a direct hit from a mortar round.

On the southwestern side of the perimeter, C Company, 2/2 Inf, received the brunt of the secondary attack. Moving parallel to Highway 4A on the western side of the road, the Viet Cong made a rush across 500 meters of open ground to hit C Company's positions. Continuous fire quickly gained fire superiority over the enemy. The company reported never sighting more than a platoon of Viet Cong in the clearing, although many more enemy soldiers fired from the woods.

As the mortar attack started and small arms fire was being received, the artillery defensive concentrations were being requested. The entire perimeter was then covered by a massive amount of artillery fire as forward observers (FOs) made adjustments toward the enemy attacks. Nearby artillery units and the artillery in FSPB II swept the area around the perimeter with 5,000 artillery rounds, while the 3d Bde's forward air controllers (FACs) directed 100 sorties of TAC airstrikes to the east and southeast. An armed C-47 airplane called "Spooky" also trained its mini-guns on the VC forces to the east of the perimeter. As air support arrived at the scene of the battle, Highway 4A was declared a fire coordination line (FCL) between the artillery and the Air Force. To the west the artillery broke the enemy's assault and prohibited him from regrouping. To the east the Air Force took over from the artillery and covered the area with bombs, rockets and 20mm cannon fire. The massive and devastating use of airstrikes and artillery broke the back of the attack.

By 2330 hours the brunt of the VC attack had been repelled; however, sniper fire continued to be received as the Viet Cong withdrew. The last enemy round fired in the battle was at 0428 hours. The early morning sweeps and aerial observation of the battle area disclosed 197 enemy killed and five wounded. US losses were three killed and 41 wounded.

Look for JUNCTION CITY, Part II
In the February Issue of
DANGER FORWARD

AWARDS CEREMONY. Men of the 2d Battalion (Mechanized), 2d Infantry, receive Silver Star Medals at Lai Khe for valor during the BATTLE OF PREK KLOK II.

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1LT
Bill
Blacksten

DIMINISHING SANCTUARY. More than seventy-seven hundred acres of dense jungle in War Zone D provided a haven for the Viet Cong until clearing operations flattened the Ong Dong Jungle.

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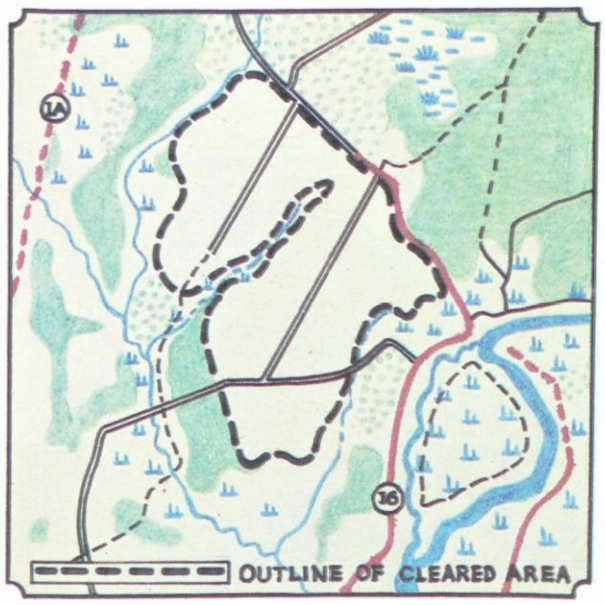
1LT Bill Blacksten

ROME PLOW. One of the 30 Rome plows to take part in the Ong Dong Jungle clearing moves in to uproot some of the dense foliage which concealed 28 VC basecamps in the War Zone D area.

SECURITY. An armored personnel carrier of B Company, 2d Battalion (Mechanized), 2d Infantry, provides security for a 168th Engineer Battalion Rome plow during the clearing of the Ong Dong Jungle.

1LT Bill Blacksten



SP4 Henry Hunter

By SP4 George P. Mercer

LEGEND TELLS OF HOW Paul Bunyan with his great axe could cut hundreds of acres of forest in a single day. The modern day, yet factual, version of this herculean feat was the Ong Dong Jungle clearing operation begun on 19 July 1967.

The massive jungle, located 20 miles north of Saigon, had long provided the Viet Cong with a route to and from War Zone D. It was also a favorite escape and haven for VC units harassing the 1st Infantry Division's Lam Son area in Binh Duong Province, which partially borders the dense jungle.

During the first phase of the operation, aptly dubbed PAUL BUNYAN I, A Company, 168th Engineer Battalion, and the 27th Land Clearing Team, working with the 2d Brigade, literally uprooted 7,726 acres of jungle and rubber. Employing as many as 30 Rome plows and bulldozers, the units cleared an average of 309 acres a day for 25 days. B Company, 1st Engineer Battalion, also supported the operation.

PAUL BUNYAN I started with the 2d Battalion (Mechanized), 2d Infantry; B Company, 2d Battalion, 34th Armor; and the engineer team moving into the southern portion of the jungle to establish the first of several bases set up for the operation.

Fire support patrol bases (FSPBS) were secured by the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry, and prior to each day's activities the area to be cleared was prepared by airstrikes and artillery fire from the 1st Battalion, 7th Artillery, and the 2d Battalion, 33d Artillery. Then tanks and armored personnel carriers (APCS) cut their way around the designated area, creating a "racetrack" or starting point for the plows. At times the foliage was so thick that the vehicles had to be guided through the jungle from above by a command helicopter.

Following this "trail-breaking," infantrymen entered the area to search for any obstacles, booby traps or Viet Cong remaining after the artillery barrages and airstrikes. Only after these preparatory measures did the plows and their APC escorts enter the area.

For rubber trees, the engineers devised a time-saving method. Connecting a long length of anchor chain between two plows, they drove down the lanes between the trees, uprooting them as they went.

During the clearing, 28 former VC basecamps, five of which were capable of supporting a battalion, were found in the area and destroyed. Of even greater value is the use of the land to the Vietnamese people for future agriculture. In fact, soon after the plows had cleared an area, Vietnamese farmers and lumbermen would move in to cart away uprooted trees for personal and commercial use.

The operation did not go unnoticed on the other side either. Everyday the engineers and infantrymen were harassed by VC efforts to halt the jungle clearing. But for all their mines, booby traps and sniper fire, the Viet Cong realized, too late, the far-reaching effect that "Paul Bunyan" would have on their control of the area.

1LT Bill Blacksten

GOING, GOING, GONE. Part of the massive Ong Dong Jungle 20 miles north of Saigon evaporates before the blade of a Rome plow during clearing operations conducted as a part of LAM SON 67.

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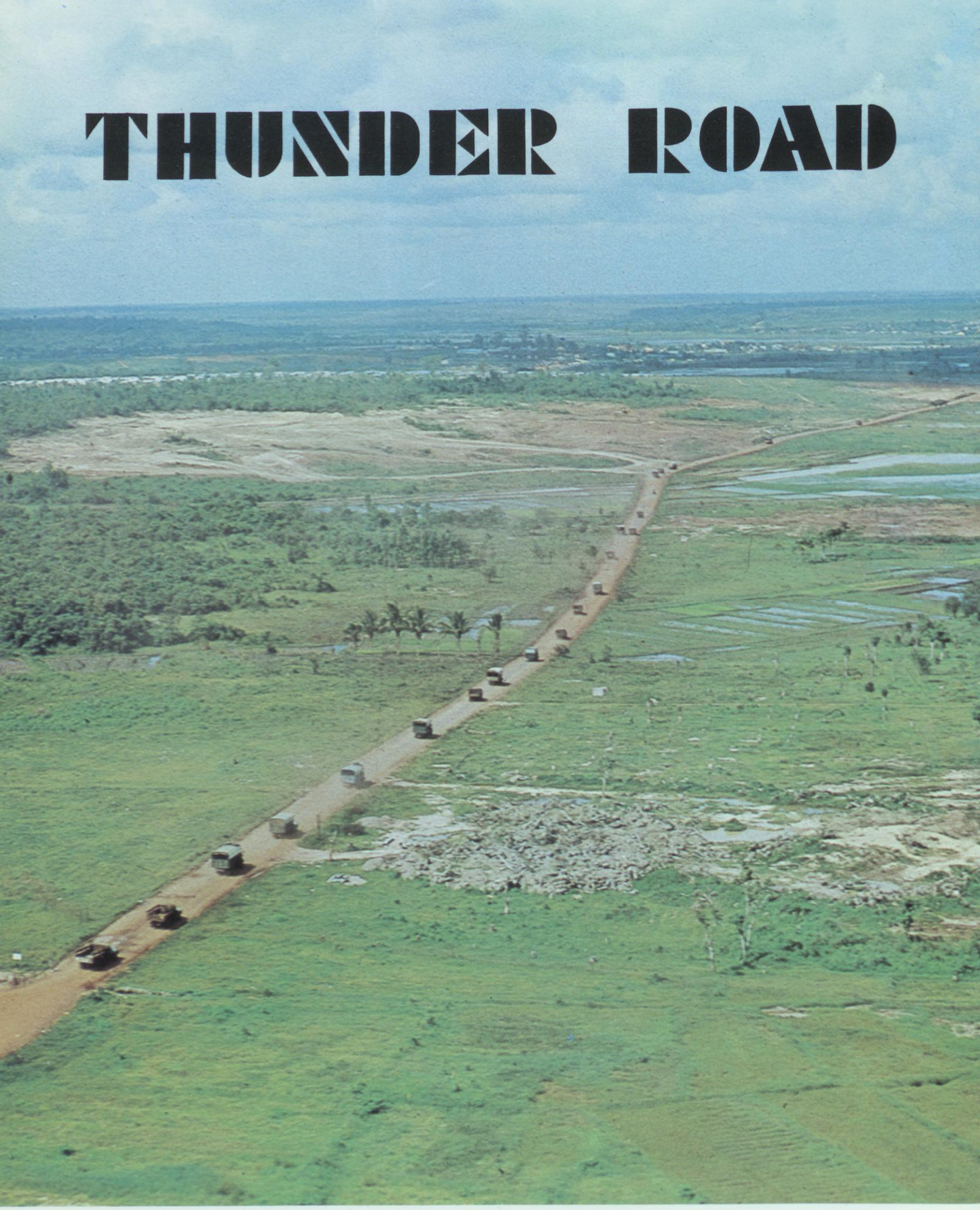
THUNDER ROAD



LIFELINE. Highway 13 is the 1st Infantry Division's main supply route between Saigon and Quan Loi. BIG RED ONE *control of the now famous road was won after many hard fought battles with communist forces.*

1LT Bill Catron

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By SSGT Gerard Forken

ON 2 JULY 1967, 150 First Infantry Division vehicles and 220 ARVN vehicles rumbled up Vietnam's National Highway 13 from Saigon to Quan Loi, some 80 miles north, without incident. Two days later, the men of the BIG RED ONE celebrated America's independence by firing a 50-gun salute at noon along the highway.

"This remembrance," in the words of Major General John H. Hay, division commander, "will serve to remind our friends in Vietnam that we all stand behind their revolution for independence and freedom."

To the Viet Cong, the salvo meant that the division now controlled the vital link between Di An and the northern base at Quan Loi. But if the highway was finally free of communists, it was only after many fierce battles had been fought and won and a handful of BIG RED ONE soldiers and South Vietnamese had paid the supreme sacrifice.

Names such as Ap Bau Bang, Ap Tau O, Srok Dong and Minh Thanh became synonymous with Highway 13, with each battle lending added weight to the fact that no mission was too difficult for the men of the Fighting First. Even when *Radio Hanoi* flatly stated that American forces would never again travel the route, these men proved "Hanoi Hanna's" prophecy false as time and time again they crushed the Viet Cong.

When the BIG RED ONE arrived in October 1965, it set about clearing Highway 13—the demarcation line between War Zones C and D—destined to be the division's main supply route between Saigon and Quan Loi. With basecamps at Lai Khe, Phuoc Vinh and Phu Loi, the task of securing the route to supply these outposts fell to the Support Command.

When Operation EL PASO II kicked off 2 June 1966, resupply was accomplished by the first scheduled convoy

SP4 M. F. Robinson

PROTECTION. A command track from the 8th Battalion, 6th Artillery, provides security and coordination as the 1st Infantry Division pushes a recent 340-truck convoy over 43 miles of Highway 13 from Di An to Phuoc Vinh.

SSGT Bob Thomas

ALWAYS FIRST. First Infantry Division convoys deliver needed supplies to Danger Forward across bridges especially designed to carry the heavy loads they are hauling. Here, the lead vehicle of a BIG RED ONE *convoy prepares to cross the Song Be Bridge, constructed by A Company, 1st Engineer Battalion.*

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121st Signal Battalion

SECURITY PLUS. This M-48 tank from the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry, moves down Highway 13 on a recent convoy, ready to counter any VC *ambush.*

to use Highway 13. Then came Operation TULSA, which proved to be the largest, fastest-moving logistical effort the division has yet carried out in Vietnam.

Over one million pounds of cargo was hauled to Dau Tieng and Suoi Da on the night of 4 Nov. Operation TULSA troops also ran the first resupply convoy from Di An to Quan Loi and opened their mainline truck route beyond Lai Khe.

The "Black Lions" of the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry, kept the highway open to enable supply convoys from Saigon to reach Phuoc Vinh.

Vietnamese civilians also began to use Highway 13 to transport their farm produce and other goods to Saigon markets without fear of enemy attack or VC tax collectors. The opening of the highway boosted the local economy as well as being of military importance.

Under the control of the 2d Brigade and the 1st Engineer Battalion, Rome plows cleared massive tracts of trees and thick underbrush on both sides of the highway to deprive the Viet Cong of cover for further attacks on convoys. The mammoth clearing also included the removal of enemy mines and improvement of the road.

In recent months, over 100 convoys from Di An to Phuoc Vinh, 43 miles north, have used the now famous highway—so dubbed "Thunder Road" by the men of the BIG RED ONE.

One convoy consisted of 300 vehicles, 126 of which were Vietnamese trucks hauling vital supplies and food for the civilian and military population of Quan Loi.

Today, convoys rumble along the dusty road with only an occasional flat tire interrupting the methodical chain. Stated General Hay, "The name of the game is to keep everything moving."

And it can take as many as 5,000 men to keep things moving. A march unit of engineers and representatives from the Division Transportation Office make the trips to Phuoc Vinh to insure that things run smoothly.

The job of security and escort is handled by elements of up to four battalions, the military police and more than a dozen helicopters. Any enemy activity would be immediately countered, for even a few disabled vehicles could bring the entire convoy to a grinding halt.

Old "Hanoi Hanna" continues to build castles in the sky and speak of VC tigers, but her warnings have become a big joke to the men of the 1st Inf Div, who now laughingly refer to her as "Highway Hanna" and feel that *13* must be her unlucky number. For the "thunder" heard today along "Thunder Road" is the rumble and roar of BIG RED ONE trucks—the lifeline of *Danger Forward*—not the thud of enemy mortars and blasts of deadly mines.

PFC Randy Woods

OVERHEAD COVER. As many as a dozen helicopters fly security and coordinate the movement of convoys traveling Highway 13 on resupply missions to the 1st Infantry Division's forward basecamps.

SSGT Bob Thomas

RED BALL. Speeding vital supplies to the men of the BIG RED ONE *is this truck rumbling up Highway 13 toward its destination at Phuoc Vinh. In recent months more than 100 convoys have traveled "Thunder Road," defying Radio Hanoi's warning that American forces would never again travel the route.*

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PFC Randy Woods

WATCHFUL EYE. Armored cavalry assault vehicles from the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry, follow an armored car from the 716th Military Police Battalion on a 1st Infantry Division resupply convoy from Di An to Phuoc Vinh.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED. Passing through the 1st Brigade gate at Phuoc Vinh, a BIG RED ONE *resupply convoy reaches the end of the 43-mile trip from Di An. The 500-truck convoy involved 4,000 men in its four-hour journey along Highway 13.*

PFC Randy Woods

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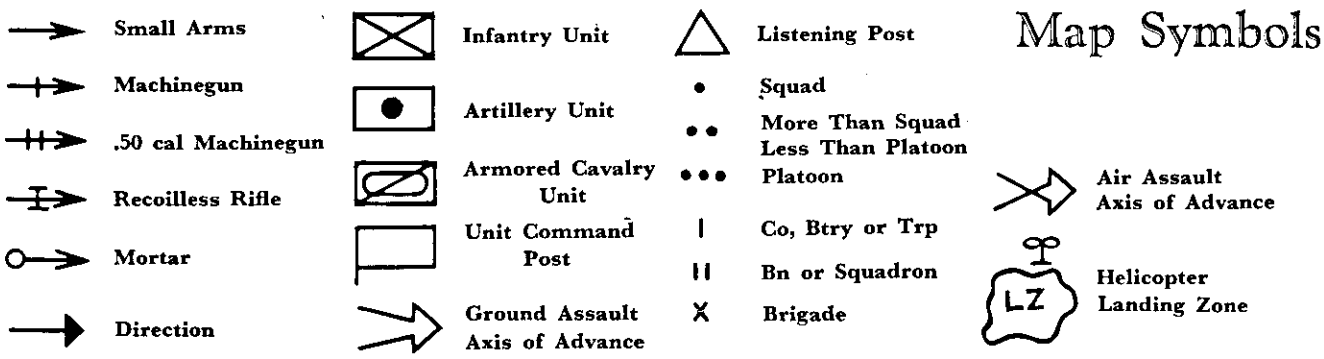
STATISTICS SUMMARY

BATTLES	UNITS INVOLVED	US COMMANDERS	ENEMY KIA*
Cam Xe (28 Oct 66) *Story on Page 6*	US 1/26 Inf C Co, 1/28 Inf A Trp, 1/4 Cav VC 3/272 VC Regt	1/26 Inf — LTC Paul F. Gorman 1/28 Inf — LTC Jack G. Whitted 1/4 Cav — LTC Leonard L. Lewane	74
Ap Cha Do (8 Nov 66) *Story on Page 10*	US 1/28 Inf 2/28 Inf VC 272d VC Regt NVA 101st NVA Regt	1/28 Inf — LTC Jack G. Whitted 2/28 Inf — LTC Elmer D. Pendleton	305
Hoa Nhut (16 Nov 66) *Story on Page 14*	US 2/2 Inf 2/34 Arm VC local guerilla forces, D44 (liaison commo element of COSVN) NVA Recon Plat, 101st NVA Regt	2/2 Inf — LTC Jack L. Conn 2/34 Arm — LTC Raymond L. Staley	43
Prek Klok I (28 Feb 67) *Story on Page 19*	US B Co, 1/16 Inf NVA 2/101 NVA Regt	1/16 Inf — LTC Rufus C. Lazzell	167
Prek Klok II (10 Mar 67) *Story on Page 21*	US 2/2 Inf (-) Hq-C Btry, 2/33 Arty VC 272d VC Regt	2/2 Inf — LTC Edward J. Collins 2/33 Arty — LTC Charles D. Daniel	197 *KIA — *Killed In Action*



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THE BIG RED ONE BAND

SSGT Bob Thomas

Ambassadors In Green

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THE BLACK SCARF BATTALION

I

There's a Black Scarf Battalion
in Vietnam.
In this Black Scarf Battalion
every man is a man.
Around their necks
the Black Scarf they wear,
A symbol of strength
of those who dare.
Fathers would be proud
of this generation,
For they are the product
of a great Land and Nation.

II

They have fought
and they have won.
And they will stay
til the battle's done.
Their leaders are proud
of their impossible task.
None have to be told,
none have to be asked.
No one can see
the misery they bear,
For it's all hidden
beneath the Scarves that they wear.

III

They surely have answered
freedom's call,
For there are many Black Scarves
a hangin', from the wall.
Some are tattered,
some are worn,
Willed to sons
still yet unborn.
They want no fame,
no fanfare or glory.
Their mission is as old
as the Infantry story.
Perhaps some day
history will record
And the Black Scarf Battalion
shall have its reward.

Staff Sergeant William H. Graley
C Company, 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry

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